Foodgrains to Tribal People

5121. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that 15 to 20 lakh tonnes of foodgrains is eaten by rats;

(b) whether it is also a fact that huge number of Adivasis/tribal people are not getting foodgrains for their livelihood; and

(c) if so, the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) The exact quantity of the foodgrains being damaged by rats in Food Corporation of India is not known. However, a Committee headed by Dr. V.G. Panse in its report submitted in 1968 had estimated about 2.5% annual post harvest losses in foodgrains due to rodents.

(b) and (c) A Central Sector Scheme of Grain Banks in tribal villages was launched during 1996-97. As per the scheme the member families of the Grain Bank are entitled to take loans of foodgrains in four instalments upto 25 kg. each during the rainy season or in any other period of scarcity. The loan is required to be returned with interest in cash or kind at the time of the next harvest season. Thus the present scheme provides for food security to the poor tribal villagers, within the village itself.

Under the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), wages are paid partly in foodgrains and partly in cash. During 2002-03, a total number of 1101.67 lakh mandays have been generated for employment opportunities for Scheduled Tribes in the country.

Remunerative prices for cotton in Orissa

5122. SHRI SURENDRA LATH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the distress sale of cotton in some parts of Orissa and particularly Rayagada district;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure remunerative prices for cotton in that part of Orissa?